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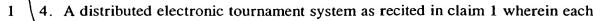
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## **CLAIMS**

## I claim:

1	1. A distributed electronic tournament system in which a plurality of remotely
2	located players participate in a tournament through input/output devices connected to a
3	central controller which manages the tournament, the system comprising:

- (a) means for uniquely identifying a player communicating with the central controller via an associated input/output device;
- (b) means responsive to payment of an entry fee by the player for allowing the player to participate in a tournament occurring within a fixed time window via an associated input/output device;
- (c) means for accessing a database to store in the database player information that is generated as the player participates in the tournament, such information being available for use in a subsequent tournament, which is administered by said controller and in which the player participates; and
- (d) means for awarding the player a prize for achieving a pre-established performance level in the tournament.
- 1 2. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein:
- 2 the system further comprises game software; and
- part of the game software resides in the central controller and part of the game software resides in the input/output devices.
- 1 3. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 2 wherein the part of
- 2 the game software residing in the input/output device performs bandwidth-intensive
- 3 functions.



- 2 input/output device includes secured memory storing tournament-related data.
- 1 5. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 4 wherein the
- 2 tournament-related data include signals representing time.
- 1 6. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the entry
- 2 fee for the tournament is based on the amount of time the player participates in the
- 3 tournament.
- 1 7. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the
- 2 attainment of the pre-established performance level requires dexterity.
- 1 8. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the
- 2 attainment of the pre-established performance level involves answering questions with
- 3 deterministic answers.
- 1 9. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the
- 2 attainment of the pre-established performance level involves prediction.
- 1 10. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 the attainment of
- 2 the pre-established performance level involves solving puzzles.
- 1 11. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the
- 2 attainment of the pre-established performance level involves strategy.
- 1 12. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the
- 2 attainment of the pre-established performance level involves chance.

- 1 13, A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the pre-
- 2 established performance level includes the amount of time required to achieve that
- 3 level.
- 1 14. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein solutions
- 2 to problems\posed in tournaments are not deterministic and evaluating them requires
- 3 judgment.
- 1 15. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the
- 2 tournament time window has a fixed end time.
- 1 16. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 15 wherein the
- 2 attainment of the pre-established performance level requires dexterity.
- 1 17. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 15 further
- 2 comprising means for notifying players who are participating in the tournament that the
- 3 tournament is about to end.
- 1 18. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the
- 2 tournament time window has a fixed start time.
- 1 19. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 18 wherein the
- 2 attainment of the pre-established performance level involves answering questions with
- 3 deterministic answers.
- 1 20. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 18 further
- 2 comprising means for notifying players who have registered for the tournament that the
- 3 tournament is about to start.

- 1 2). A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the prize
- 2 for the tournament depends on the number of players participating in the tournament.
- 1 22. A\distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the
- 2 number of players in the tournament is restricted to be below a preset value.
- 1 23. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein a pre-
- 2 determined number of positions for players are reserved for a selected group of players
- 3 until the starting time of the tournament is a preset time away, at which time the
- 4 reserved positions will be made available to all players, including those not within the
- 5 selected group.
- 1 24. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the means
- 2 responsive to payment of an entry fee provides the option for the player to pay before
- 3 the player participates in the tournament/
- 1 25. A distributed electropic tournament system as recited in claim 24 wherein the
- 2 means responsive to payment of an entry fee provides the option for the player to enter
- a password, which is linked to the player's credit card number to automatically charge
- 4 the entry fee to the credit card account.
- 1 26. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the means
- 2 responsive to payment of an entry fee provides a plurality of payment options.
- 1 27. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 26 wherein the
- 2 means responsive to payment of an entry fee:
- stores the payment option selected by the player in the tournament; and
- 4 automatically activates that option after the player has been identified in a
- 5 subsequent tournament.

- 1 28. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein there are
- 2 a plurality of games in the tournament and the games are different.
- 1 29. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 28 wherein each
- 2 game in the tournament is governed by a set of parameters, whose values change as a
- 3 function of time.
- 1 30. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein:
- 2 the tournament includes at least one game; and
- that game is based on a contemporaneous live event.
- 1 31. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein:
- 2 the tournament includes a plurality of games; and
- 3 each player participates in a plurality of games.
- 1 32. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein:
- 2 there are a plurality of games in the tournament,
- a number of games have different game formats;
- different players are involved in games in different game formats;
- 5 the outcomes of the games are statistically normalized to facilitate comparison
- 6 among different game formats; and
- 7 the players in games in different game formats compete against each other to
- 8 win common prizes.
- 1 33. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 8 wherein the
- 2 system keeps track of the amount of time the player participates in the tournament.
- 1 34. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein each
- 2 player has to complete a qualifying event before the player can participate in the
- 3 tournament.

- 1 35.\ A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 34 wherein the
- 2 system determines if a player is eligible to participate in a subsequent tournament based
- on the results of the player's participation in the present tournament.
- 1 36. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the
- 2 difficulty level of the tournament is adjusted as the tournament is played.
- 1 37. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein:
- 2 the tournament includes games; and
- the games in the tournament are based on a recently concluded event.
- 1 38. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein each
- 2 input/output device comprises a screen having multiple windows thereon, with one
- 3 window displaying the tournament in which the associated player is currently
- 4 participating.
- 1 39. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 38 further
- 2 comprising means for the player to enter preferences which determine the size of the
- 3 window displaying the tournament.
- 1 40. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the player
- 2 information includes payment information.
- 1 41. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the player
- 2 information includes the player's performance information.
- 1 42. A distributed electronic tournament system as recited in claim 1 wherein the player
- 2 information includes the player's preferences.

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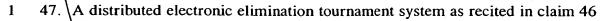
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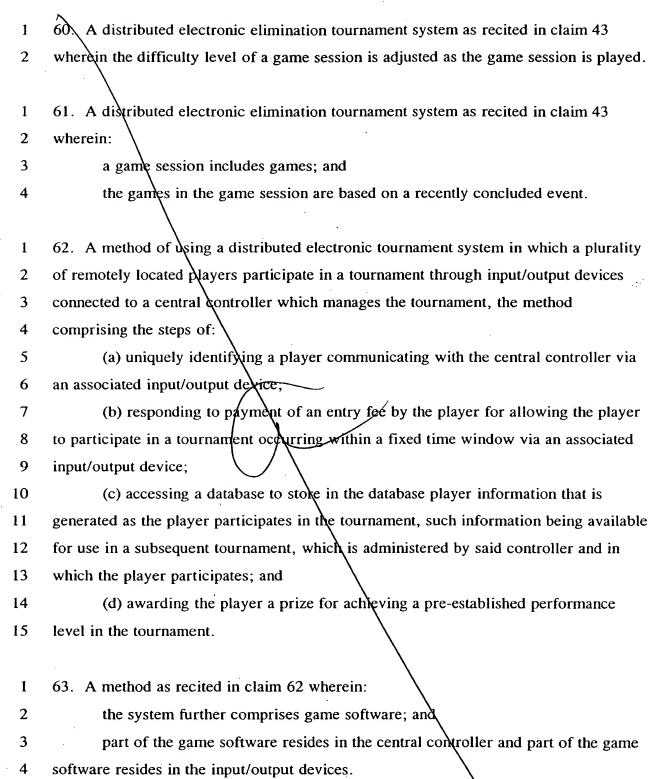
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43. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system in which a plurality of
removely located players participate in a tournament having multiple game sessions
through input/output devices connected to a central controller which manages the
tournament, the system comprising:
(a) means for uniquely identifying a player communicating with the central

- (a) means for uniquely identifying a player communicating with the central controller via an associated input/output device;
- (b) means responsive to payment of an entry fee by the player for allowing the player to participate in a particular game session occurring within a fixed time window via an associated input/output device;
- (c) means for determining whether the player has been qualified to advance to a subsequent game session, in which at least one player is eliminated from the previous game session;
- (d) means for awarding the player a prize for being qualified to advance to a subsequent game session; and
- (e) means for permitting each player qualified to a subsequent game session to participate in that game session.
- 1 44. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 43
- wherein a database associated with the central controller manages the game sessions,
- 3 said database containing information on individual players.
- 1 45. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 43 wherein:
- 3 the system further comprises game softward; and
- for each game session, part of the game software resides in the central controller and part of the game software resides in the input/output devices.
- 1 46. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 43
- 2 wherein each input/output device includes secured memory storing game-session-
- 3 related data.



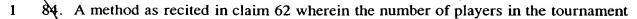
- wherein the game-session-related data include signals representing time.
- 1 48. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 46
- wherein the game-session-related data include payment information.
- 1 49. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 43
- 2 wherein the game session time window has a fixed end time.
- 1 50. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 43
- wherein the game session time window has a fixed start time.
- 1 51. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 50
- 2 further comprising means/for notifying players who have registered for a game session
- 3 that the game session is about to start.
- 1 52. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 43
- wherein the number of players in a game session is restricted to be below a preset
- 3 value.
- 1 53. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 43
- wherein a pre-determined number of positions for players are reserved for a selected
- 3 group of players until the starting time of the game session is a preset time away, at
- 4 which time the reserved positions will be made available to all players, including those
- 5 not within the selected group.
- 1 54. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 43
- wherein the means for a player to pay an entry fee provides a plurality of payment
- 3 options.

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1	55. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 54
2	wherein the means for a player to pay an entry fee:
3	stores the payment option selected by a player in a previous game session; and
4	automatically activates that option after the player has been identified.
1	56. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 43
2	wherein:
3	a game session includes at least one game; and
4	the game sessions are based on a contemporaneous live event.
1	57. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 43
2	wherein:
3	there are a plurality of games in a game session;
4	a number of games have different game formats;
5	different players are involved in games having different game formats;
6	the outcomes of the games are statistically normalized to facilitate comparison
7	among different game formats; and
8	the players in games in different game formats compete against each other to
9	win common prizes.
1	58. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 43
2	wherein each player has to complete a qualifying event before the player can participate
3	in a game session.
1	59. A distributed electronic elimination tournament system as recited in claim 58
2 .	wherein the system determines if a player is eligible to participate in a game session
3	hased on the results of the player's past participation



- 1 64. A method as recited in claim 63 wherein the part of the game software residing in
- 2 the input/output device performs bandwidth-intensive functions.
- 1 65. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein each input/output device includes secured
- 2 memory storing tournament-related data.
- 1 66. A method as recited in claim 65 wherein the tournament-related data include
- 2 signals representing time.
- 1 67. A method as recited in claim 65 wherein the tournament-related data include
- 2 payment information.
- 1 68. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the entry fee for the tournament is based
- 2 on the amount of time the player participates in the tournament.
- 1 69. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the attainment of the pre-established
- 2 performance level requires dexterity
- 1 70. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the attainment of the pre-established
- 2 performance level involves answering questions with deterministic answers.
- 1 71. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the attainment of the pre-established
- 2 performance level involves prediction.
- 1 72. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the attainment of the pre-established
- 2 performance level involves solving puzzles.
- 1 73. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the attainment of the pre-established
- 2 performance level involves strategy.

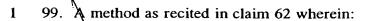
- 1 74. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the attainment of the pre-established
- 2 performance level involves chance.
- 1 75. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the pre-established performance level
- 2 includes the amount of time required to achieve that level.
- 1 76. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein solutions to problems posed in
- 2 tournaments are not deterministic and evaluating them requires judgment.
- 1 77. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the tournament time window has a fixed.
- 2 end time.
- 1 78. A method as recited in claim 77 wherein the attainment of the pre-established
- 2 performance level requires dexterity.
- 1 79. A method as recited in claim 77 further comprising the step of notifying players
- who are participating in the tournament that the tournament is about to end.
- 1 80. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the tournament time window has a fixed
- 2 start time.
- 1 81. A method as recited in claim 80 wherein the attainment of the pre-established
- 2 performance level involves answering questions\with deterministic answers.
- 1 82. A method as recited in claim 80 further comprising the step of notifying players
- 2 who have registered for the tournament that the tournament is about to start.
- 1 83. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the prize for the tournament depends on
- 2 the number of players participating in the tournament.



- 2 is restricted to be below a preset value.
- 1 85. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein a pre-determined number of positions for
- 2 players are reserved for a selected group of players until the starting time of the
- 3 tournament is a preset time away, at which time the reserved positions will be made
- 4 available to all players, including those not within the selected group.
- 1 86. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the step of responding to payment
- 2 provides the option for the player to pay before the player participates in the
- 3 tournament.
- 1 87. A method as recited in claim 86 wherein the step of responding to payment
- 2 provides the option for the player to enter a password, which is linked to the player's
- 3 credit card number to automatically charge the entry fee to the credit card account.
- 1 88. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the step of responding to payment
- 2 provides a plurality of payment options.
- 1 89. A method as recited in claim 88 wherein the step of responding to payment
- 2 includes the steps of:
- storing the payment option selected by the player in the tournament; and
- 4 automatically activating that option after the player has been identified in a
- 5 subsequent tournament.
- 1 90. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein there are a plurality of games in the
- 2 tournament and the games are different.
- 1 91. A method as recited in claim 90 wherein each game in the tournament is governed
- 2 by a set of parameters, whose values change as a function of time.

1	92. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein:
2	the tournament includes at least one game; and
3	that game is based on a contemporaneous live event.
1	93. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein:
2	the tournament includes a plurality of games; and
3	each player participates in a plurality of games.
1	94. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein:
2	there are a plurality of games in the tournament;
3	a number of games have different game formats;
4	different players are involved in games in different game formats;
5	the outcomes of the games are statistically normalized to facilitate comparison
6	among different game formats; and
7	the players in games in different game formats compete against each other to
8	win common prizes.
1	95. A method as recited in claim 68 wherein the system keeps track of the amount o
2	time the player participates in the tournament.
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- 96. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein each player has to complete a qualifying 1
- event before the player can participate in the tournament. 2
- 97. A method as recited in claim 96 wherein the system determines if a player is 1
- 2 eligible to participate in a subsequent tournament based on the results of the player's
- 3 participation in the present tournament.
- 98. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the difficulty level of the tournament is 1
- 2 adjusted as the tournament is played.



- 2 the tournament includes games; and
- 3 the games in the tournament are based on a recently concluded event.
- 1 100. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein each input/output device comprises a
- 2 screen having multiple windows thereon, with one window displaying the tournament
- 3 in which the associated player is currently participating.
- 1 101. A method as recited in claim 100 further comprising the step of entering by the
- 2 player preferences which determine the size of the window displaying the tournament.
- 1 102. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the player information includes payment
- 2 information.
- 1 103. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the player information includes the
- 2 player's performance information.
- 1 104. A method as recited in claim 62 wherein the player information includes the
- 2 player's preference.